

Feb 7, 2023

To: Sen. Joseph Rafferty, Senate Chair
Rep. Michael Brennan, House Chair

It is with great pride that I would like to provide some insight as to why Health and PE should be reintroduced into the State of Maine diploma requirements. I have been an educator for twenty-four years, twenty one of which at Lewiston High School. Before I started in the Physical Education and Health teaching field, I first started as an Exercise Physiology/Physical Therapy Aide at Sports Medicine East in Skowhegan, ME. I was able to work with a variety of populations from the apparently healthy, athletes, post cardiac rehab clients, and nursing home residents. I was asked to think about getting into the Physical Education and Health teaching fields.

Physical Education has evolved from simple game play into Social and Emotional Learning and Lifelong Fitness Education which helps students analyze and design their own fitness lifestyles. This can help with overall mental health including depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress and more. It also helps with physical health issues such as obesity, heart disease and much more. We have seen the results of a positive wellness culture that has been created in our school. This is possible with all students of all ability levels, socio-economic status and ethnicities. Empowering students to take control of their mental and physical health is a primary goal. We use heart rate monitor technology which helps level the playing field with students of all fitness levels.

The mental and physical health of our school community was affected dramatically during and after the pandemic and quite honestly our students need physical and health education now more than ever. The well-being of our students is not something that we should be questioning... This is something that should be given to anyone that prioritizes education and the future of children. Please consider this proposal for our students.

All the best,

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Please see attached written testimony.